

Irish Potato Festival, NC Potato Festival ^[1]

State Irish Potato Festival of North Carolina: North Carolina Potato Festival

By Amy Kemp

Government and Heritage Library, 2017

See also: [North Carolina State Symbols and Official Adoptions main page](#) ^[2]



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^[3]In 2009, the General Assembly designated the [North Carolina Potato Festival](#) ^[4] (formerly the Albemarle Potato Festival) as the official Irish Potato Festival [Session Laws, 2009, c. 24](#) ^[5].

Selection as State Irish Potato Festival

The bill to make the North Carolina Potato Festival the official Irish Potato Festival of North Carolina was backed by Rep. Bill Owens of Pasquotank County and Sen. Charlie Albertson of Duplin County. The bill was introduced in the House in March, and was signed into law in May of 2009.

About the North Carolina Potato Festival

The North Carolina Potato Festival began in 1940 as the Albemarle Potato Festival. The first festival included a parade and the Potato Queen beauty pageant. The Albemarle Potato Festival continued sporadically until 1970 when it ended permanently. It was revived in 2001 as the North Carolina Potato Festival, and is now the largest festival in Northeastern North Carolina.

The three-day festival includes many notable activities, including the National potato peeling contest, the Little Miss Tater Tot pageant, a 5K run, cornhole and potato sack tournaments, an auto & bike show, boat races, and a United States Coast Guard search & rescue demonstration. Occurring throughout the festival is the street carnival with food, arts & crafts, and 'spudtacular' rides. Over 12,000 people attend the festival, which is usually held in mid-May.

The potato is an important crop in Northeast North Carolina. As of the bill's adoption in 2009, North Carolina harvested 16,000 acres of potatoes statewide, 12,000 of which was in the Northeast portion of the state. Potatoes provide North Carolina up to \$16 million dollars in sales. The average American eats 142 pounds of potatoes every year.

North Carolina Session Laws

SESSION LAW 2009-24

HOUSE BILL 588 *H588-v-4*

AN ACT TO ADOPT THE ALBEMARLE POTATO FESTIVAL AS THE OFFICIAL IRISH POTATO FESTIVAL OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

Whereas, North Carolina's northeast region has been home of the Albemarle Potato Festival, now known as the North Carolina Potato Festival, for over 24 years; and

Whereas, of the more than 17,000 acres statewide used for Irish potato cultivation, the northeast region of the Albemarle contains 12,000 of those acres; and

Whereas, the economic impact of Irish potato farming is at least 13 to 16 million dollars annually in the northeast region; and

Whereas, the festival showcases the Albemarle area's major Irish potato producing counties, with Pasquotank County

being the largest producer in the State; and

Whereas, the festival entertainment, street fair, water activities, and evening dance draw attention throughout the northeast region; and

Whereas, the tourism industry flourishes during the North Carolina Potato Festival, benefiting the economy of not only the northeast region but also the entire State; Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new section to read: "§ 145-30. State potato festival. The Albemarle Potato Festival is adopted as the official Irish potato festival of the State of North Carolina."

SECTION 2. This act is effective when it becomes law. In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 13th day of May, 2009.

s/ Beverly E. Perdue Governor

Approved 6:10 p.m. this 13th day of May, 2009

References:

Official North Carolina Potato Festival webpage: <https://www.ncpotatofestival.com/> [4]

Elizabeth City Tourism: <https://visitelizabethcity.com/> [6]

Johnson, Mark. "Senate: You say potato....," *News & Observer, The*: Blogs (Raleigh, NC), May 11, 2009.

"Huge crowd expected for Potato Festival - 9th annual event starts with flyover," *Daily Advance, The* (Elizabeth City, NC), May 13, 2009.

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